

I CLAIM AS MY INVENTION:

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1. A method for entering contents of a franking imprint into a postage meter machine, said postage meter machine having an electronic, digitally operating printer and said contents being employed for printing said franking imprint with said printer, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a set of data in a non-volatile memory of said postage meter machine by programming said additional data at said manufacturing location, said data being selected from the group consisting of different country-specific data and different carrier-specific data;

installing a data communication interface in said postage meter machine; and configuring said franking imprint of said postage meter machine dependent on at least one of a selected carrier and a selected country, by communicating with said postage meter machine via said interface, to select at least one of said permanently programmed carrier-specific data and country-specific data.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 comprising installing a chip card reader as said interface, and configuring said postage meter machine using a chip card insertable into said chip card reader before delivery of said postage meter machine to said use location.

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3. A method as claimed in claim 2 comprising storing said additional data in said non-interchangeable memory of said postage meter machine in a non-erasable manner at said manufacturing location, and subsequently selecting from a plurality of different carrier-specific data, in said additional data, by communicating via said

interface with a country-specific chip card inserted into said chip card reader, and setting an inhibit bit in said non-interchangeable memory after removing said chip card to prevent any further configuration of said postage meter machine.

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4. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said additional data includes carrier-specific data and country-specific data, and wherein both a carrier-specific selection and country-specific selection are made using said chip card.

5. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said interface comprises a chip card reader and comprising configuring said postage meter machine at said manufacturing location for a selected country wherein said postage meter machine is to be used by inserting a country-specific chip card into said chip card reader and combining country-specific data on said chip card with said permanently stored carrier-specific data.

6. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said interface comprises a chip card reader and comprising configuring said postage meter machine at said manufacturing location for a selected country wherein said postage meter machine is to be used by inserting a carrier-specific chip card into said chip card reader and combining carrier-specific data on said chip card with said permanently stored country-specific data.

7. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said interface comprises a chip card reader, and including the additional step of transferring print image data for said franking imprint from a chip card inserted in said chip card reader into a graphic memory of said postage meter machine for generating at least a carrier specific franking

imprint, and after removal of said chip card setting an inhibit bit in said graphics memory to prevent any further configuration of said postage meter machine.

8. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said interface comprises a chip card reader and comprising configuring said postage meter machine at said manufacturing location for a selected country wherein said postage meter machine is to be used by inserting a country-specific chip card into said chip card reader and combining country-specific data on said chip card with said permanently stored country-specific data.

9. An arrangement for entering contents of a franking imprint into a postage meter machine comprising:

a chip card reader;

a microprocessor connected to said chip card reader;

a non-volatile memory connected to said microprocessor, said non-volatile memory containing memory areas for storing data for producing said franking imprint; and

said microprocessor receiving data from said chip card reader for a franking imprint from a chip card inserted in said chip card reader and loading said data into said memory areas to configure said franking imprint.